defences in front of Amiens were overrun in the debacle of March, 1918. As it was, the Germans were given plenty of time to rally and to throw in their reserves. By means of counter-offensives they were able to consolidate their defence without very much more loss of ground.

The battle then resolved itself into a series of attacks and counter-attacks on isolated villages and posts—futile and bloody.

On 16th April the French launched their great attack on the plateau above the Aisne. Was it a victory or a defeat ? The Germans have no doubt that it was for them a victory.

There were many Generals and politicians amongst the Allies who took their view. On the other hand there were distinguished Generals not in the least implicated in the strategy or tactics of the battle, who regarded it as a qualified success. The result is thus summarised by Foch, Gouraud, and Bruy&re, who had been appointed by the French Chamber to enquire into the circumstances of the fight and its conduct:—

> " It was a success but not a breaking through. . . ."

Verdict of French Committee of Enquiry

" To sum up : from 17th to 23rd April, the date at which the investigations of the Commission have to stop, General Nivelle abandoned all idea of breaking through rapidly and violently towards Laon and confined his objective in that direction

to the capture of the ridge of the Dames.

All the steps he took were directed to clearing Reims from the enemy, a result which he tried to obtain by joint attacks of the IVth and the Vth